

Stewardship Programme Planning Guidelines

“Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from movement to movement, is given to you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to his service, you could not give him anything that was not in a sense his own already”.

C. S. Lewis; Mere Christianity

What is Stewardship?

A biblical world view of stewardship can be defined as, "utilizing and managing all resources **God** provides for the glory of God and the betterment of his creation". Stewardship is therefore a matter of discipleship as we give in response to God's generosity, and his ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross. A stewardship programme is not simply a way of raising money for the immediate needs of the church, it is an opportunity to explore what the congregation corporately and the individuals in the congregation, are called to do with all that God has given them. It is also an opportunity for celebration and thanksgiving for all that has already been given and all that the church means to its community and congregation.

What does a programme look like?

A typical stewardship programme lasts between three and five Sundays (depending on the pattern of worship in your particular setting):

Launch Sunday: this is when the packs of information are handed out to members of the church, although it is quite usual for there to be some packs which will be handed out later or delivered to those who can't always make it on a Sunday. This is also the first Sunday when the subject of Stewardship is explored. See **Handout 5** for guidance on different ways to introduce the subject for Sundays during a programme.

The subsequent Sundays, through to thanksgiving Sunday (when response forms are collected and offered in an act of thanksgiving) are your opportunity to explore the subject of Stewardship and how it connects into the community life and worship of your church. These weeks might include midweek activities or specially themed Sundays, including prayer, preaching, hymns/songs, liturgy, and so on.

The final Sunday will be your **Thanksgiving Sunday** and an opportunity to celebrate the responses you have received and give thanks for all that God is doing in your community.

After the programme has ended the small planning team will evaluate process and report back to PCC, with a thank you letter to all members of the church.

Where to begin.

If it has been some time since your church discussed stewardship it might be helpful for your PCC to review your current practices. The resource 'Giving for Life' provides a useful discussion starter and includes a PCC discussion guide and questionnaire to help you decide where to focus your efforts: <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/givingforlife/>.

If, following discussion, you have decided that a full stewardship Programme is the next step; the website <http://www.givingingrace.org/index.php> is a wonderful resource containing everything you need to develop and plan a full stewardship programme and we highly recommend it as a resource.

You may wish to spend some time exploring the site and could either follow the planning guidelines there or, if you feel overwhelmed by the amount of information on the site, you can use the attached handouts (1-5) to help you navigate the basic elements of a programme contained on the site.

Getting Started.

When starting to plan a programme there are some basic decisions that all planning groups need to make which will help greatly with the planning process *see Handout 1 for a checklist of items to think about when planning a programme:*

First things first: Choose the dates for the launch and thanksgiving; these dates will then help you to plan in the deadlines for preparation. Attached is a handy *timeline* which you can adapt with your own dates to help you keep track of what needs doing and when. In terms of planning there are a few decisions which need to be made early:

1. If the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is available in your area and you are planning your programme to launch the service in your parish then many of the programme materials you will need will be provided to you when you register on the scheme. In this case you should refer to your implementation guide before planning your programme. When launching PGS you should still think about providing your own printed brochure explaining the needs and vision of your church, but the response packs you use will be provided to you by your diocesan PGS team and you will also receive posters and other materials to help you promote the service beyond the initial launch programme.
2. Who is going to put together the design of the brochure and leaflets? There are a number of options available. Your decision may depend on the level of IT capability in your group and you may choose to use a combination of materials to get your message across.
 - a. You can find templates to help you create leaflets specific to your parish through <http://www.givingingrace.org/The-Brochure>. A leaflet clearly setting out your vision as a church community and a brief explanation of your financial challenges is by far the best way to get people engaged with giving to their own church but it should

always be presented alongside positive teaching about the discipleship aspects of giving more generally.

- b. There are a range of generic leaflets available through Church House [insert contact details here] which you could use on the middle Sunday(s) of your programme to supplement the teaching on stewardship.
3. Allocate responsibilities within the planning team to take care of the component tasks of putting the information together. You do not need a large planning group to cover each of these activities - some roles might be combined, while others (in particular the project leader) should probably be given to one person within the team.
 - a. **Project leader** Someone to act as overall coordinator and ensure that each of the group has their assigned tasks done and ready, this persons key responsibility is to keep an eye on the planning timeline and make sure any key dates are met and everyone knows what they are being asked to do and when.
 - b. **Administrator** for the group; to go through the electoral roll and any other lists of potential contacts, and work out how many people are going to be approached (and thus how many packs you will need) this person also needs to co-ordinate the letters to go in the packs and the thank you letters after the campaign to inform people of your success. ***This person should also check to ensure that your programme complies with the requirements of GDPR (link to GDPR guidance)***
 - c. **Communications** - Someone or a couple of people will need to write the narrative parts of the brochure in as friendly and approachable manner as possible. We recommend that the whole group spends some time working on the overall message, expressing what is important and special about your church, and getting to grips with why stewardship is important to your future plans. ***Handout 2 “writing the brochure”*** is a helpful guide to get you thinking and there is a wide range of resources on <http://www.givinginrace.org>.
 - d. **Treasurer/finance officer** - Someone to pull together the financial information and do the giving analysis which will form the financial section of your programme. Again we recommend you discuss the findings of the financial analysis as a group, ***Handout 3 “Financial Conclusions”*** will help with this.
 - e. **Teaching and sharing** Someone will need to be responsible for thinking about the content of the worship and teaching elements of the programme, in particular preaching and prayer, but also any social events, small group discussions or financial presentations. You will need to identify these tasks as you fill in ***Handout 1***.
 - f. **A photographer** - someone to start taking/collecting photographs that reflect the life of the parish you will need engaging images for the brochure and any presentations you want to think about including in your campaign. ***See handout 4 for some basic tips for any photographers.***
4. These guidelines, handouts and timeline are designed to guide you through planning your own campaign, however if you require any further guidance or support at any time you can contact xxxx